

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OCTOBER 5, 1962

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ADVANCE FOR PMS OF MONDAY, OCT. 8

BY HELEN G. SPIRO

CPYRGHT

YONKERS HERALD-STATESMAN REPORTER

(ADVANCE) ..YONKERS, N.Y., OCT. 8 (AP)-MRS. RUTH REDMOND, A 64-YEAR-OLD WIDOW, LEAVES SATURDAY ON A FLIGHT THAT WILL TAKE HER HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD TO JOIN HER SON FOR HIS 43RD BIRTHDAY. THE SON, HUGH FRANCIS REDMOND JR., HAS BEEN IN A RED CHINESE PRISON FOR THE PAST 11 YEARS.

MRS. REDMOND CARRIES WITH HER A WRISTWATCH FOR HIS BIRTHDAY, A CAMERA WITH WHICH TO TAKE HIS PICTURE AND A MOTHER'S HOPES THAT, PERHAPS, THIS WILL BE HIS LAST BIRTHDAY BEHIND BARS.

SHE CARRIES ALSO THE PRAYERS OF HER NEIGHBORS.

REDMOND, WHO SERVED AS A PARATROOPER IN WORLD WAR II, IS ONE OF FOUR AMERICANS STILL HELD IN RED CHINESE PRISONS. HE WAS EMPLOYED BY AN IMPORT-EXPORT CONCERN IN 1951 WHEN THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS ARRESTED HIM ON CHARGES OF ESPIONAGE AND SENTENCED HIM TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

FERVENT PLEAS FOR HIS RELEASE HAVE BEEN MADE BY MRS. REDMOND ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY TO BOTH AMERICAN AND RED CHINESE AUTHORITIES, BUT TO NO AVAIL.

SHE HAS MADE ONE PREVIOUS TRIP TO RED CHINA, IN JANUARY 1958. THEN, TOO, HER PLEAS FOR HIS RELEASE WERE IN VAIN.

WHEN HER HUSBAND DIED THREE YEARS AGO, MRS. REDMOND MADE STILL ANOTHER URGENT APPEAL IN THE NAME OF MERCY AND OF A MOTHER'S LOVE, BUT HER PLEAS AT THAT TIME WERE NOT EVEN ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES.

"SINCE WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE RED CHINA OR THEY US," MRS. REDMOND LAMENTED, "THERE IS NO AMERICAN CONSULATE THERE TO DEAL WITH. I HAVE GROWN OLD TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY HUGH HAS NOT BEEN HELPED."

YET SHE HAS NEVER GIVEN UP HOPE. SHE NOW PRAYS THAT PERHAPS, IN LIGHT OF HER LONELINESS AT THE APPROACH OF OLD AGE, REDMOND'S LIFE SENTENCE MIGHT BE COMMUTED AND HE BE ALLOWED TO RETURN WITH HER.

ALSO IMPRISONED IN RED CHINA ARE JOHN T. DOWNEY OF NEW BRITAIN, CONN., AND RICHARD FECTEAU OF LYNN, MASS., ARMY CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES JAILED IN PEIPING ON ESPIONAGE CHARGES SIMILAR TO THOSE AGAINST REDMOND, AND ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP JAMES E. WALSH OF CUMBERLAND, MD., WHO WAS SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS FOUR YEARS AGO.

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DOWNEY IS SERVING A LIFE TERM AND FECTEAU A 20-YEAR SENTENCE. BOTH HAVE BEEN IN PRISON MORE THAN 10 YEARS. BISHOP WALSH IS PAST 70.

ON HER FIRST VISIT TO RED CHINA, MRS. REDMOND WAS ACCOMPANIED BY TWO OTHER MOTHERS, MRS. JESSIE FECTEAU AND MRS. MARY DOWNEY, AS WELL AS MRS. DOWNEY'S SON, WILLIAM. THEY WERE THE FIRST AMERICANS TO ENTER CHINA WITH U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT PERMISSION SINCE THE KOREAN WAR.

AT THAT TIME, MRS. REDMOND PAID SEVEN VISITS TO HER SON IN PRISON OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL WEEKS.

ALL THE MOTHERS REPORTED THEN THAT THEIR SONS SEEMED TO BE WELL-TREATED AND IN GOOD SPIRITS, AND THE MOTHERS WERE FREE TO ROAM ABOUT AND SIGHTSEE BETWEEN PRISON VISITS.

WORD OF RED CHINA'S DECISION TO ALLOW MRS. REDMOND ANOTHER TRIP CAME LAST MONTH THROUGH THE AMERICAN RED CROSS. PRESIDENT ALFRED M. GRUENTHER SAID HE HAD BEEN NOTIFIED OF THE DECISION BY THE RED CROSS SOCIETY OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.

MRS. REDMOND IS SCHEDULED TO REACH HONG KONG MONDAY AND TO CROSS OVER THE COMMUNIST CHINESE SOIL ON THE FOLLOWING DAY. THE TWO WEEKS SHE HOPES TO BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN RED CHINA WILL HAVE HER AT THE PRISON CAMP IN PEIPING ON OCT. 30, HER SON'S BIRTHDAY.

"IF THEY ARE AS KIND AS THEY WERE ON MY LAST TRIP," SHE SAID "I WILL HAVE A BIRTHDAY CAKE MADE AT THE HOTEL AND HAVE DINNER SENT IN, SO WE CAN CELEBRATE TOGETHER."

IN ADDITION TO THE WRISTWATCH BIRTHDAY PRESENT, MRS. REDMOND IS CARRYING THE SHOES, SOCKS, VITAMINS AND OTHER PERSONAL NEEDS REQUESTED BY HER SON.

FOR THE PAST 11 YEARS, SHE HAS BEEN WRITING HIM EVERY WEDNESDAY AND SUNDAY NIGHT AND SENDING HIM REGULAR MONTHLY PACKAGES OF FOOD AND CIGARETTES. THESE ARE DELIVERED THROUGH THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE AMERICAN, BRITISH AND CHINESE RED CROSS.

MRS. REDMOND HAS ALSO BEEN PERMITTED TO SEND A 4½-POUND PACKAGE OF BOOKS TWICE A MONTH. THESE INCLUDE WORKS IN SPANISH, FRENCH AND RUSSIAN, WHICH REDMOND READS, WRITES AND SPEAKS FLUENTLY.

THEIR CONVERSATION, LIKE THEIR LETTERS, WILL BE CONFINED TO FAMILY NEWS, AND THEIR MEETINGS ON THIS TRIP WILL PROBABLY BE AS BEFORE-- IN A ROOM AT THE PRISON WITH THE PRISON SUPERINTENDENT AND AN INTERPRETER ALWAYS PRESENT.

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BUT MRS. REDMOND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO IT WITH ALL THE LOVE  
AND A LONGING A MOTHER CAN MUSTER.

"JUST," SHE SAID, "SO I CAN SEE HUGHIE AND TOUCH HIM."

END ADVANCE FOR MONDAY, OCT. 8- SEND OCT. 5

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